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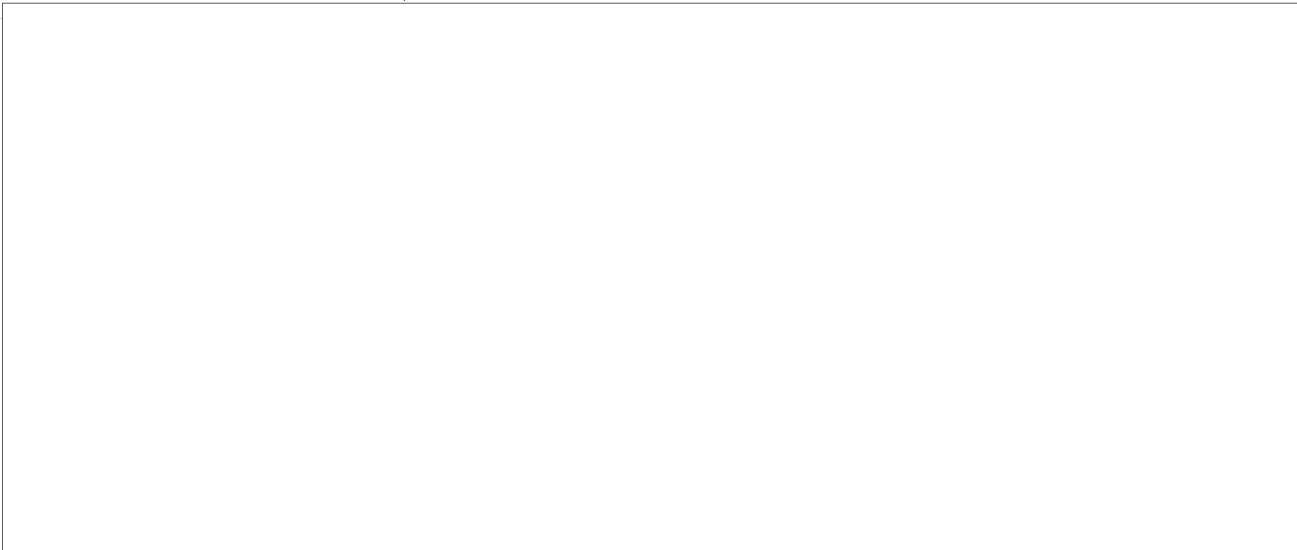
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
7 May 1954

GENEVA CONFERENCE BULLETIN - VIII

Roundup of indications of the Communist position regarding Indochina:

A. Cease-fire

1. Soviet press gave considerable attention to World Peace Council Bureau's resolution calling for an immediate truce.
2. Member of the Soviet UN delegation suggested to US official on 15 April the possibility of a compromise settlement in Indochina similar to the Korean armistice under which fighting would cease and each side would retain areas it now holds.
3. On 18 April, Moscow Home Service reaffirmed the Viet Minh's readiness to begin cease-fire negotiations and suggested that "an expression of good will on the part of the French authorities also would produce a real possibility for the restoration of peace in Indochina."



6. Although current Soviet comment continues to assert the desirability of a peaceful settlement, it still avoids any suggestion of settlement terms. While Moscow broadcasts in last week do not reflect Peiping's laudatory publicity on Nehru's 24 April cease-fire proposals, the Colombo Conference is hailed for

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the "support given Nehru's peace plan." While comment by Peiping and Viet Minh media also avoids allusions to settlement terms, there is stress on "direct negotiations."

B. Partition

[redacted] Soviet suggestions regarding partition have been addressed only to American and British officials.

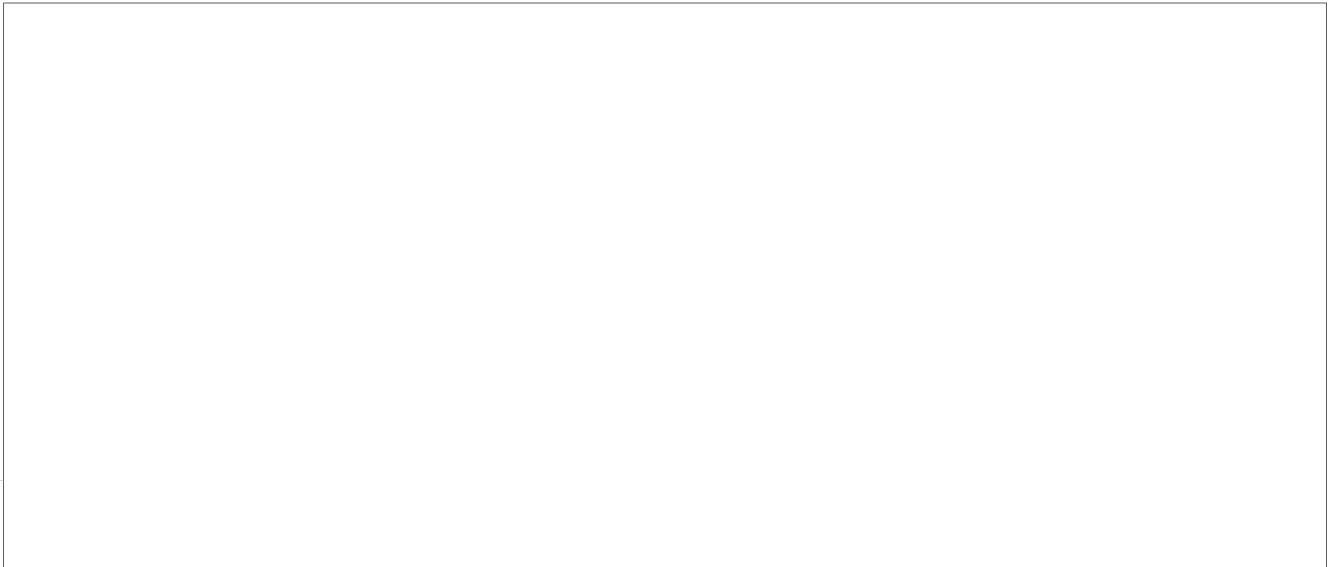
1. The first secretary of the Soviet embassy in London suggested to American diplomats on 4 March that if the US and France object to an amalgamation of the Viet Minh and Vietnamese administrations, "they can agree to a division along the 16th parallel." Such a solution, he said, would "tend to guarantee" China's southern frontier.

2. The first secretary of the Soviet embassy in London mentioned to the British Foreign Office on 19 March the similarity between Korea and Indochina problems and observed that if partition is to be the solution for Korea then the same solution might be applied in Indochina. He repeated several times that the Chinese Communists are "definitely sensitive" regarding their southern frontier.

3. A Soviet diplomat told an American official in London on 27 April that there appeared to be growing interest in partition of Indochina, "a solution which seemed feasible."

C. Coalition

1. Member of the Soviet UN delegation told an officer of the French delegation in New York on 27 April that, following a strictly military cease-fire, an "eventual settlement should be political rather than territorial."



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2. Kingsbury Smith of INS, informed the American delegation on 4 May that Popov, editor of Moscow News stated that the Communists would not propose partition or a coalition government but instead would ask for supervised nationwide elections in the three Associated States. He said the Communists probably would lose in Laos and Cambodia but would win 60 percent of the vote in Vietnam, and that the Communists preferred "neutral supervision" rather than UN supervision.

E. Communist effort to include Laos and Cambodia, as well as Vietnam, in negotiations for an Indochina settlement

1. Popov statement above that Communists would propose elections in all three Associated States.

2. Statement by Viet Minh Foreign Minister on arrival in Geneva that the conference must restore peace on the basis of the recognition of the national rights of the peoples of Vietnam, Khmer and Pathet Lao.

3. Soviet and Chinese publication of the protests against US intervention issued by the foreign ministers of the resistance governments of Laos and Cambodia.

F. Communist propaganda suggests uncertainty and concern about the form of possible Western action in the event no cease-fire is reached at Geneva

1. Peiping's People's Daily has stated that the answer to the question of what Western "united action" would lead to "has already been given in the Korean war." Pravda said that "repetition of the Korean variant" would end in "defeat for the aggressors." On 15 April a Soviet official in New York told an American official that the Chinese "could not be blind" to the French and "now American" threat to their southern borders.

2. Communist propaganda is exploiting Secretary Dulles' departure as a demonstration of Western disunity and the result of the failure of the US "policy of force." At the same time, however, this emphasis is occasionally qualified by observations that Dulles' failure to secure agreement on "united action" at this time does not mean abandonment of American plans and does not guarantee that Britain and France will not eventually endorse these plans. A Pravda article on 4 May stated that "the advocates of the position of strength policy" have by no means given up their aggressive intentions but have made "only a temporary retreat and are awaiting a more favorable moment to renew their intrigues."

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Conclusions: The Communists' immediate objective appears to be a cease-fire, preferably at French initiative, which will remove the threat of US/UN intervention and will afford them ample time to maneuver for the most favorable political settlement later. It is believed that they desire to keep the cease-fire separate from the complex and difficult question of a political settlement. Communist tactics suggest that Bloc leaders believe political pressures in Paris and the plight of the Dien Bien Phu garrison will force the French to accept a cease-fire at almost any price. With respect to a political settlement, the maximum Communist objective appears to be the creation of a provisional coalition government in Vietnam, and possibly also in Cambodia and Laos.

Rhee still opposed to plan B: At a meeting with US representatives in Seoul on 5 May, South Korean authorities opposed plan B because (1) it derogates from ROK sovereignty, (2) it contained no authority to hold elections under the ROK constitution, (3) an announcement of new elections would cause great consternation in Korea, (4) it was in effect asking Rhee to resign, and (5) elections in the north were impossible until the Chinese withdraw and until the ROK has administrative control over North Korea.

Over the objections of the Prime Minister and Defense Minister, Rhee tentatively agreed to the holding of elections in North and South Korea, pursuant to the ROK constitution and its electoral laws, and without foreign interference, for a National Assembly and a President under the observation of the UN, provided: (1) the Chinese forces withdraw, (2) the Chinese and USSR promise they will not re-enter Korean territory and the US stands by the ROK in case of aggression.

Since plan B states specifically that the all-Korean government would be formed under the ROK government, and since the US-ROK mutual defense treaty assures South Korea of American support in case of aggression, these aspects of Rhee's conditions do not appear critical. His demand for a Chinese withdrawal prior to the elections is unrealistic, however, unless he is willing to accept a simultaneous withdrawal of UN forces. His failure to mention disarmament of the North Korean army may have been an oversight, since he fully realizes any election in the north with the army intact would return a full slate of Communist assemblymen, followed by Communist demands for a coalition. He may intend to raise this and other questions, such as changes in the defense treaty and in the economic aid program, at subsequent discussions.

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